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ABSTRACT

Library networking is defined, and several topics are examined as they relate to developing nations--the need for library networking, the necessity of a survey of existing services, the network structure, the legal framework, financing, the need for manpower, and technological needs. Library networking is defined as the process of carefully planning and setting up a connected national system of libraries, documentation and archives services, and the predetermination of the implementation process to achieve the set goals of the system. (Author/JEG)

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RESOURCE SHARING OF LIBRARIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE CASE FOR LIBRARY NETWORKING

by

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RESOURCE SHARING OF LIBRARIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE CASE FOR LIBRARY NETWORKING

PAPER TO BE DELIVERED AT THE IFLA/UNESCO PRE-SESSION SEMINAR FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

AUGUST 29TH - SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1977
ANTWERP UNIVERSITY (BELGIUM)

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INTRODUCTION

Foremost, permit me colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, to indulge in paying highest tributes to IFLA/UNESCO, the organisers of the Presession Seminar. It is a great meeting that has brought together librarians of varied experience and status from different countries. We are all gathered here to share experiences and discussions geered to see better "international understanding" through our dear profession of Librarianship. We librarians from developing countries, have multi-pronged problems in providing library services to our nations. Our colleagues in developing countries have already passed this phase. The implication here is that, we from developing countries have to learn a lot from colleagues from developed countries. This would save us the pain and embarrassment of repeating costly mistakes in library development. The importance of this Seminar cannot therefore be overemphasised and one hardly finds adequate words to express "thanks" to those who have made the Seminar a reality.

The General theme of this Pre-session Seminar is Resource Sharing of Libraries in Developing countries. I am going to endeavour to discuss with you the aspect of library networking. The term "Resource Sharing" is a recent coinage in the vocabulary

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of librarianship. Most of us seem to be more familiar with the term "Library Cooperation". "Resource Sharing" then may be treated as a synomym of "Library Co-operation". Library Co-operation means, the working together of libraries for the "[1]same end, purpose or effect". The end, purpose or effect may be co-operative; acquisition, processing, storage or delivery, etc. Likewise resource sharing of libraries is geered to co-operative/shared or co-ordinated libraries' efforts in the aspects of human, financial, material, etc. resources. We have not to search very far for examples of co-operative schemes in the developed countries. In the United Kingdom we have the examples of the British National Bibliography and the British Library. In U.S.A. we find schemes like the Farmington Plan and National Programme for Acquisition and Cataloguing (NAPC); The Scandanivia countries have the Scandia plan; and in Germany we find the programme of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft; ad infinitum.

WHY RESOURCE SHARING OF LIBRARIES:

The Library Budget which is ever decreasing and never adequate has always dictated the need for resource sharing of libraries in developing countries. In a situation where there are limited funds, economy has to be the order of the day since there is no more effective means of meeting this challenge than the pooling of resources so as to avoid duplication. However, as "[2]Jefferston" argues, there are now more reasons neccesitating resource sharing of libraries. There is the "Information explosion" referring to the prolific production, sometimes overproduction, of reading materials in all types and forms, making it impossible for any single library, very rich as it may be, to collect, preserve and disseminate all publications. There is therefore need for co-operative efforts by way of specialisation in collection, preservation, processing, etc.

(I) Oxford English Dictionery.
(2) Jefferson G. Library Co-operation.

Disparity in library resources has caused concern in minds of liberal and universalistic people to plead for provision of library services equally to all citizens of the country. This has called for sharing of library resources so that weak and strong library institutions could satisfy the needs of their clientele through co-operation.

Another reason for library resource sharing, emanates from the "professionalization" of librarianship. Social, economic, political and technological progress has continued at supersonic speed. Consequently there has been prolific publications and documentation and other forms of library materials demanding sophisiticated handling and transfer. This has necessitated highly trained and differentiated personell to cope up with the situation. Since Education and training in librarianship is and expensive undertaking and can but be illafforded by individual countries, co-operation has come in.

As a result of generous national education development plans, more educated and literate people have emerged. Their demand on library, documentation and archieve services has therefore increased as they need unlimited library materials for leisure, information, research, etc. Because of the quantity of library materials that should overpower any library institution, single handed, co-operation has been the answer.

Perhaps the greatest reason for co-operation is our aspiration which has its ultimate aim as the promotion of international understanding and the establishment of world peace, in the "minds of men". The constitution of UNESCO declares that in promoting of its aims it will: [1] "maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge ..... by assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books ..... by encouraging co-operation among the nations in .... the exchange of publications ..... and other materials ..... and ..... by initiating methods of interna-

tional co-operation calculated to give the people of all countries access to the printed and published material produced by any of them". Many countries are undertaking co-operative schemes at national and international levels as an answer to this call, among other things.

Developed countries have gone far in satisfying their needs. They have explored and utilised their natural resources. Consequently their national incomes are large enough and the per capita income is big enough to enable their citizens live comfortable lives. (There might be exceptions but I am talking in general terms). Education in these countries has reached such level as to provide adequate specialist personell at all levels to plan and foster development in all sectors of the community. Life expectancy is high in these countries mainly because of the medical and educational standards acquired coupled with unlimited Governments' efforts which have led to the successful conquering of ignorance, poverty and disease.

It may therefore appear that developed countries have enough funds on their hands for even developing unco-ordinated library, documentation and archieve services. Yet developed countries now insist more on resource sharing to make ends meet and provide equitable services. If developed countries need resource sharing of libraries, then developing countries should need it more because their human, financial and material resources are inadequate and limited in acute proportions.

Generally speaking, the current situation of resource sharing in developing countries is far from satisfactory. This does not mean that there are no such schemes. We have for example: the East African School of Librarianship which is a regional co-operation in training of librarians in East and

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(I) Constitution of UNESCO. In: UNESO. Looking at UNESCO. 2nd ed. Paris, UNESCO, 1973. Appendix, 101 - 111.

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Central Africa. Another case is the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Librarians (SCECSAL) a biannual occasion bringing together librarians, documentalists, and achievists to discuss common problems. In Tanzania exists a National Board that plans and executes development of all types of library services in that country. At home, in Uganda, we have the Public Libraries Board, which sets up policy, makes plans and execute public library service development in the entire country. There are many more examples in other developing countries. The point I want to make here is that, we in the developing countries not only realise but appreciate the need of resource sharing of libraries. We have just started and a Seminar as this one will enhance the momentum of growth in this direction.

HOW DOES LIBRARY NETWORKING COME IN?

In everyday speech and experience we are familiar with the word network. We hear of communication networks such as railways or canals; Information networks, like radio and TV. Now we have library networks. The defination of network according to the Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (Second Edition) is (a) a complex system of lines that cross; (b) connected system. For the purpose of this paper, I am taking defination (b) (i.e.) connected system. Library network therefore is the connected system (complex) of all types of libraries of a specified locality - country, region etc. The permeating characteristic of such network is the interelationship, interdependency and interlocking of the individual component library institutions in the system: be they University, public, or school libraries; documentation, archieve or information centres. The development is geered to one end namely efficient collection, preservation and transfer of information to all.

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The term 'library networking' potrays the meaning: the planning and setting up of a connected library system - the structure of the system and how this 'connected system' will be operating to achieve the forecast goals'. For the purposes of this paper therefore, library networking will be defined as 'the process of carefully planning and setting up a a connected national system of libraries, documentation and archieves services and the predetermination (forecast) of the implementation process to achieve the set goals of the system.' Two things must be differentiated here: The structure (connected system) as an entity and the working of that structure. It must also be clear from the beginning that the system is concerned with "those who organise it and the manner in which it should be organised". Library networking must also be viewed from the angle of a constantly evolving process to cater for changes. It also matters who does library networking. This calls for a partnership between qualified Senior Librarians and planners concerned with educational, social and economic development. One can echo the famous words of C.V. Penna: "The training of library services planners sufficiently familiar with Socio-Economic problems, national education plans, the impact of science and technology or the modern world, conditions and trends in the production of books and audio-visual materials, and the use of interpretation of statistics, may radically modify the course of development of library services!!" This is true of library networking.

NEED FOR LIBRARY NETWORKING

Technological, Scientific, and Cultural advancement has created unprecedented demand on somehow limited national resources. It is paradoxical that the more advancement we witness the less the financial resources to cope up with the resultant demand. As a result, governments all over the world developed or

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Penna, C.V.
The Planning of library and Documentation Services, 2nd ed. revised and encoureged by P.H. Sevell and H. Liebaers. Paris, UNESCO 1976.

otherwise are exercising stringent economy. This is more rigid in developing countries. So as governments invest more and more money and personell in developing all types of libraries, documentation and archieve services, they now insist that overlap and duplication in the provision of these services be avoided by directly planned action rather than harphazard corroboration. It is through this planned action - 'Library networking'- that, borrowing S.B. Aje's words, [1]"Sustained patronage of Government", will be forthcoming.

Sustained Government patronage is a pre-requisite for National library, documentation and archieve network, because, again using S.A. Aje's words, "[2]The functions of the government in the provision of a national library service, include the promulgation of the necessary legislation for the establishment of libraries and legal deposits of publications, financing library services and development projects, allocating grants for library research, bibliographical and documentation, generally encouraging international exchange of library personell is the form of secondment, attachments and participation in bi-and-multi-national professional conferences, as well as the development of professional and technical manpower for the library service and documentation."

PROCESS OF LIBRARY NETWORKING

FOR WHOM?

We in developing countries, have at times understandibly been in great hurry. There are so many things to be done to develop, and always time has been against us. As a result we have been tempted to copy en masse progress from developed countries and force them on our new emerging countries. This is even more true in library, documentation and archieve services. My view is that

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1,2. AJE, S.B.
The role of National libraries in development and problems of National Bibliography and Legal deposits. Proceedings of the Fifth Biennual Conference, Nairobi, September 1972 - Pg. 25-40

library networking should avoid this pitfall. It is therefore necessary that "library networking" should be done with full knowledge of the culture, education, traditions, beliefs, geography, history and economics of the particular country. In other words library networking must relate to the needs, capability, philosophy and reality of a particular country. In a country where literacy is still a privilege of a few and hence of necessity communication is mainly oral and visual, provision should cater for both types of clientele. Where the population is scattered or rural, attention should be paid to providing services to these areas, not forgetting the urban concentration of population as well. In a nutshell, the philosophy behind library networking should be the most appropriate information/knowledge material through the most suitable medium to the proper reader at the least inconvinience, wherever the reader is. We must appreciate the fact that every individual at whatever standard needs information for whatever he does and it is the purpose of good library networking to cater for the varied demands.

Present Position

When we have established the question "for whom is library networking?". We have to turn our attention to the present situation of library, documentation and achieve services in the country. In other words we need a survey of the existing services. What are the present library, documentation and achieve institutions? What facilities do they offer, at what level and for whom? What use is being made of them and what are the defficiencies both in human, financial and material resources? What are the legal bases of those institutions? These questions will make us appreciate at what stage we have to effect library networking. Is it at the "infant" stage? (Situation where there are negligible or no documentation or archieve services in the country?) or is it at

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the primary/secondary level? (situation where the library, documentation and archieve services already exist but in a haphazard manner). Establishing the current state of the existing services is vital because it would affect the nature and direction of library networking. One confronted with the 'infant situation' would apply consolidated library networking whereas one confronted with primary/secondary library networking would be applying absorbing library networking the purpose in both cases being a comprehensive and co-ordinated library, documentation and archieve network for the entire country.

The Structure Of The Network

Co-ordination, economy and the need to absorb libraries documentation, and archieve services into the overall national development plans in other sectors of society ought to dictate the structure.

It is of highest importance that documentation, libraries, and archieve services should not be thought of as isolated units, no even as a national network of such units separate from other professions and sectors of society which are in fact closely related. "[1] The professions are able to draw strength and inspiration from each other's efforts by recognising their inter-relatedness." Of necessity the structure of the above description would call for a 'co-ordinating body' to be in charge of establishing the plan, acquiring resources and distributing responsibilities as well as of international liasons on the governmental level. It would not be expected to carry out operational activities, but rather to initiate activities by delegating them to project groups or operational agents. This central co-ordinating body should be formed of representatives of all appropriate government departments, parastatal bodies

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(1) UNESCO: Objectives for national and international action. Pg. 15.

and semi-official institutions and of representative specialists from information fields.

The components of the structure itself should represent all types of libraries, documentation and archives services which should be developed into one interrelated and coordinated network. Effective co-operation between all these services should be promoted particularly in the areas of production of national bibliographies, co-operative acquisition of materials, centralized processing, abstracting and indexing, establishment of Union catalogues and inter library lending systems, data processing, use of reprographic, audio visual and other equipment and translation and preservation facilities. In brief the structure to be of active, should allow maximum flexibility, should promote effective co-operation between all types of services within the network; all available resources should be utilized to the maximum, while great compatibility and standardization is aimed at and the international exchange of information of all materials should be facilitated.

The Issue of Legislation:

The apparent main obstacle to the development of libraries, documentation, and archives services is the fact that their contribution to national development cannot be quantified in concrete terms say in terms of profit and loss as we know in common terms. Neither are their cases so appealing like those of hospitals or roads. Yet the contribution of libraries, documentation and archives services to national development is real. It is therefore essential to establish a legal framework to ensure recognition of the services, their funding, permanency, relations with all relevant authorities, manpower, professional status, structure, internal and international relations. It is hoped that existence of such comprehensive legislation would decrease vulnerability to drastic reductions in the services budget.

Those responsible for library networking should ensure that all such provisions that would ensure a smooth running of the network are incoporated in the act. Fortunately there is plenty of literature which should act as guidelines. It is also important to stress that the type of legislation to be adopted should reflect the circumstanees of the particular country. In light of the above the appropriate legislation should:

(i) Ensure the legal deposits of national publications.

(ii) Strengthen and support the telcommunication network as a key element in transfer of information.

(iii) Implement existing agreements and conventions aimed at facilitating the exchange of all types of information, and remove administrative barriers to the free flow of information.

(iv) According to qualified personell in the information field, similar status and conditions of services to those accorded to professionals of equivalent educational level in other fields.

(v) Reach agreements concerning the equivalence of examinations and diplomas obtained in other countries.

(vi) Safeguard the nation's archieval heritage against all endangering factors.

(vii) Permit access to archieves that are no longer classed as confidential.

Above all, legislation should be flexible to accommodate change brought by the momentum of development.

The Aspect of Financing

Library networking should pay exceptional attention to the funding of libraries, documentation and archieve services' network. Funds will play an inevitable role in the providing of working premises, acquisition and processing of material in all forms;

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training of manpower; establishing exchange programmes at both national and international levels etc. etc. The main source of funding appears to be from Government in form of annual subventions. Some countries have been beneficiaries international aid (United Nations agencies, the United Nations Development Programm, bilateral arrangements with donor countries and even the direct help from Foundations). Whichever is the source of funds there is need for presenting well argued, realistic and properly costed plans reflecting the libraries, documentation and archieve needs of the country. Co-ordination and co-operative efforts should be evident in these plans so as to avoid duplication in resources. Governments, international bodies and donor countries have so many demands on them and have come to apply stringent financial measures. Therefore dases to win favourable consideration would be those showing convincing and proper thought reflected in the plans of development of these services.

The issue of the ratio of government expenditure to libraries, documentation and archieve services has been of great concern to us for along time. There appear to be two alternative views. One view is the specification of minimum government contribution to the development of these services - say 5% of the Education budget or a specified rate calculated according to population basis, etc. The other view is the "fluid concept".This does not specify actual rates but generally states that financiers should avail adequate funds so as to allow developments of effective services. Now it is obvious that both of these views have advantages and disadvantages and consequently none of them appear to be all embracing. Perhaps this Seminar can provide a better basis of calculation of funds for development of library, documentation and archieve services as guidelines for us in developing countries. However, ~~xxxxxxx~~ in requesting for funds for these services three targets should be considered:-

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(i) Inclusion of the costing of all components of the libraries, documentation and archieves network.

(ii) Harmonisation and co-ordination of all resources for the components of the network, whether from internal or international sources.

(iii) Development of adequate salary structure for the professions involved in information work. This would prevent the "man power drainage".

Need For Manpower

Library networking as well as the ensueing library network need manpower to execute them. The question of manpower is therefore important in relation to library networking because the operation, review and maintenance of the "library network" depend on the availability of manpower. Foremost, there must be a survey of manpower: the current supply of manpower quantitatively and qualitatively and the use made of such manpower. In view of the survey, manpower planning should be effected and its target should be the production of adequate manpower at all levels for all libraries, documentation and archieve services in the network. This manpower planning should ensure constant supply of personell and should avoid overproduction.

Secondly, it must be established where training is to be done locally or abroad? Because of lack of training facilities, and well established library traditions many of the information personell for developing countries have been trained abroad (in developed countries). Training abroad has its advantages; library schools are well established, in terms of training facilities including audio-visual aids, equipment and lecturers and there are organised professonal groups. On the other hand, training abroad

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has the disadvantage of the trainees, learning facts and techniques many of which are irrelevant to owns country. However, it is now gratifying to note that many schools abroad have adapted syllabuses to suit individual trainees' needs in their countries.

Thirdly, it is vital to consider the curriculum/syllabus of training. Education in librarianship is a multipronged affair: one would need academic (philosophy history development of information provision) and practical training (techniques of acquisition, classification, cataloguing, subject indexing, etc.) Further, one would need post qualification training through attachments/internships or study tours. There is need for specialisation too. All such training would produce a well educated, trained professional librarian capable of handling varied situations in the provision of information. It is also appropriate here to mention the need for a strong professional association which, among other things, should ensure proper and high standards of education, training and practice of information workers. It cannot be overemphasised that the effectiveness of library, documentation, and archieve network will depend on the availability of properly trained and adequate manpower. Lastly it has to be emphasised here that due to the fantastic expenditure, the setting up of and operation of library schools demand, developing countries should endear the regional co-operation in training information personell. Already the East African School of Librarianship is an example. Much as Regional schemes, like library schools have problems the advantages outweigh disadvantages.

TECHNOLOGICAL NEEDS

It might be argued that because developing countries have limited resources the need for considering technological planning for the "library network" is out of question. No. We in the developing countries are developing at supersonic speed and we

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ought to look well ahead. So the developing countries' future capability in handling information effectively will depend on how well and rapidly they are able to intergrate technological methods and devices into the mainstream of their information systems. As new technology takes its toll, library, documentation and archieve services cannot be the exceptions. Hence library networking should concern itself with technology. "[1]First technology is costly and a long range government comittiment is required from the outset to ensure the stability of the programme. Second technology is complex and a common sense of technical direction at the national level is imperative if all relevant agencies are to co-ordinate their activities effectively. Third technology is specialised and the evolution of a national information programme must be synchronised with the technical education of the people who will operate it. And finally because technology is by its nature innovative, its introduction ivariably alters traditional ways of doing things and necessitates national attention to the problems of use re-education."

But, developing countries should not rash technology into library, documentation and archieve services. This should come at the opportune time. Above all, in introducing technology, special attention should be paid to compatibility, standardization and system performance and analysis.

(I) NATIS: Objectives for national and international action. Paris. UNESCO, 1975.

UNIVERSAL BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CONTROL

If we were to achieve the cherished promotion of international understanding and consequently the establishment of world peace in the minds of men, then there ought to be crossfertilisation and exchange of cultural and educational wealth between the individual countries of the world. This is where UBC comes in. Doroth Anderson explaining UBC said that "UBC envisages a system in which each country undertakes the responsibility of recording the publications (with that word used in its widest possible sense) produced in that country and makes those bibliographical records in accordance with standards which are internationally accepted and acceptable". To achieve this each publication published in a country would be recorded in the country of origin and the bibliographic record thus produced would be used in information systems throughout the world. Library networking should therefore ensure that a coherent machinery for UBC is set up in the country's library network. There must be established 'Legal Deposit Act' to facilitate the mandatory deposit of each and every publication emanating from the country. The Act should ensure comprehensiveness of collection and as such it must aim at the very source of publications. There is argument as to whether the Act should demand publication from publishers or printers. The predominating view is that the printer should be the best source since many publications which would be printed but not published, would also be collected. The worst obstacle in UBC is the failure of depositing publications. This in most cases is due to inefficient machinery set up to effect legal deposit law. At times this is worsened by the linient penalties set up to counteract those who disrespect the law. Hence it is important too that the law should be very strong so as to check defaulters.

When publications are deposited, they must all be recorded according to acceptable international standard formats.

UNESCO in co-operation with IFLA has produced methods of recording bibliographic data on book production i.e. the International Standard Bibliographic Descriptions for Monographs (ISBD(M) and Serials (ISBD(S) which are very useful guides in the production of national bibliographies. There are other standards for facilitating the identification, ordering and processing of the national book and serial production. These include: International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and as part of UNISIST programme the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). It is hoped that these developments will go along way to see unmarred free flow of information at international level thereby making accessible information from individual countries to others and vise-varsa. This would result into international understanding. Library networking should therefore emphasise development of UBC in the information system of the country.

CONCLUSION:

In the last 30 or so minutes, I have been sharing with you Library Networking as an aspect of RESOURCE sharing of Libraries. All along, I have sought to establish the fact that library Networking ("The process of carefully planning and setting up a connected national system of libraries, documentation and archieves; and the predetermination (forecast) of the implementation process to achieve the set goals of the system") can and should play an important part in the promotion of effective policy of resource sharing of libraries. Resource sharing of libraries, it appears to me, has come to stay with us forever, because as our information and education needs multiply, our capability to meet them seem to be lessening as there are inumerable demands from other sectors of society on the limited national budget. The onus is on us, therefore, to effect library networking that will present the government with carefully reasoned and co-ordinated

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plans for the information network (libraries, documentation and archieve services) of our countries. It is only then that we hope to win the sympathy of the ever tough and sticky financiers of our information plans, be they national governments or international bodies.

Further, our call of international understanding between the peoples of all countries, will possibly become a reality if we evolve national information systems that will marry into the international information system thereby facilitating the flow of information to and flo this system to creat dialogues through the multiplicity of world cultures and experiences as recorded by man for man in the library materials of all forms. I should end on a note of optimism that we shall succeed if we do not relax our efforts.

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